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OTHER MATTERS

MATTERS BEFORE THE COMMISSION AT ITS ELEVENTH SPECIAL SESSION DISCUSSION OF WHICH WAS DEFERRED UNTIL THE PRESENT SESSION

Review of recurrent publications and other documentation: summary of comments received from States members of and observers to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs

Note by the Secretary-General

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INTRODUCTION

1. In its decision 1988/101, the Economic and Social Council requested "its subsidiary bodies responsible for recurrent publications to review them with the objective of identifying and discontinuing those that no longer serve a useful purpose".

2. A note by the Secretary-General on the review of recurrent publications and other documentation (E/CN.7/1989/19) was submitted to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs at its thirty-third session. This document listed all relevant recurrent publications, studies or reports and manuals of the Division of Narcotic Drugs of the United Nations Secretariat; it also provided a background on each publication or document in order to facilitate the review to be undertaken by the Commission.

3. After consideration of document E/CN.7/1989/19, the Commission adopted resolution 4 (XXXIII), entitled "Review of recurrent publications and other documentation", 1/ in which it requested "States members and observers of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs to review the usefulness for them of the publications and documentation of the Division of Narcotic Drugs, bearing in mind current resource constraints" and "to submit their findings to the Division of Narcotic Drugs by 30 June 1989, for review by the Commission at its next session".

4. The Secretary-General transmitted this request by a notification to 170 States. A summary of the comments received (E/CN.7/1990/13) was submitted to the Commission at its eleventh special session. Since the Commission deferred consideration of this matter until its thirty-fourth session, 2/ a second notification was issued to allow the States that had not replied to the first one to express their views. The present document is a consolidated summary of all the answers received to the two notifications and it updates and supersedes document E/CN.7/1990/13.

5. Up to 30 September 1990, 35 written replies had been received: from 19 members of the Commission (Australia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Côte d'Ivoire, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, France, Germany, Federal Republic of,* Indonesia, Italy, Malaysia, Mexico, Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland, Thailand and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) and 16 other States or territories (Austria, Bahamas, Chile, Finland, German Democratic Republic,* Guatemala, Myanmar, Netherlands Antilles, Norway, Oman, Philippines, South Africa, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Venezuela and Zambia).

6. Some of the replies were of a general nature: they expressed satisfaction with the quality and usefulness of the publications and documentation of the Division and stated that all of them should be continued, without exception. In one reply, a general distinction was drawn between the working documentation of the Commission, which should in any case be maintained and the technical and scientific publications, which could, if necessary, be suspended. In another reply, it was suggested that the publications should be consolidated as far as possible. General comments were made also on the distribution of the publications and documentation. In one reply, it was recommended that all documents

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*On 3 October 1990, the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany merged to form a single sovereign State called Germany.

should systematically be sent to the national co-ordinating body of each country. Another suggestion was that the publications should be sent to one address only in each country, to save postage and administration costs. Specific comments were made on each publication and on the different types of documentation, and suggestions were made regarding their periodicity, availability and contents.

7. The present document summarizes the salient points made on each publication or type of documentation listed in document E/CN.7/1989/19. Given the limited number of replies received, this summary cannot be interpreted as reflecting the opinion of the Commission and should be considered merely as a starting-point for discussion.

I. COMMENTS ON RECURRENT PUBLICATIONS

A. Bulletin on Narcotic Drugs

8. The Bulletin on Narcotic Drugs was viewed as very useful by almost all those who replied. One Government reported that the Bulletin was one of the reference documents used by its courts in matters relating to drugs.

9. In some replies, however, it was suggested that the publication of the Bulletin be reduced to one or two issues a year, with the possibility of bringing out a special issue should the need arise. In one reply, it was noted that, in view of the financial constraints, the Bulletin could be published in English only, as was the case for most scientific publications. In another reply, it was recommended that the publication be discontinued. In yet another reply, the view was expressed that the Bulletin should, on the contrary, be issued more frequently.

B. National laws and regulations relating to the control of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances

10. In several replies, documents in the E/NL. series, on laws and regulations promulgated to give effect to the provisions of the international treaties on narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, were described as very useful and necessary for the preparation of new laws and regulations and for the conduct of comparative studies.

11. In one reply, it was suggested that, in view of the current financial constraints, the publication in two languages (original and translation) could be dispensed with.* Several Governments suggested that the series should be available in the office of the Division of Narcotic Drugs and forwarded to States and other interested users only upon request. One Government suggested that, instead of sending full copies of drug legislation, the Division might send annotated lists of new legislation, setting out the main provisions. The information contained in these lists would be supplied by the legislating countries; full copies of the laws could be provided upon request by the Division.

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*At present, the documents in the E/NL. series are published either in English only, or French only, or in Spanish/English or Spanish/French.

C. Cumulative Index of National Laws and Regulations Relating to the Control of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances*

12. The views on the Cumulative Index of National Laws and Regulations Relating to the Control of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances were similar to those expressed regarding the E/NL. series. The Index was deemed very useful as a companion document to the laws and regulations and worth continuing. Some Governments favoured transmitting the Index upon request only.

D. Information Letter

13. The Information Letter was considered to be a useful publication, which met a very real need. The suggestion was made to publish it more frequently and to issue it on either a quarterly basis or every second month, as had originally been scheduled. In one reply, however, it was suggested that the number of issues should be reduced from three to two a year.

14. Some Governments considered that the contents of the Information Letter could be improved and made more relevant to the needs of States. One Government wished more notice to be given to international meetings. The suggestion was made that an extended version of the Letter should be prepared that would include summaries of the trends described in other documents or publications of the Division, such as the Bulletin of Narcotic Drugs, the Cumulative Index, the quarterly summary of reports of significant seizures of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances (E/NS. series), and the summary of annual reports of Governments relating to narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances (E/NR. series).

II. COMMENTS ON STUDIES OR REPORTS

A. Quarterly summary of reports of significant seizures of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances

15. Though the quarterly summary of reports of significant seizures of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances (E/NS. series) was generally considered to be useful, several Governments suggested that it be issued at less frequent intervals or that its availability be limited. A six-monthly or yearly publication was favoured by two Governments. It was noted in one reply that, in view of the intelligence data it contained, the summary should be made available only to national agencies and police organizations. In another, the summary was considered mostly relevant for international organizations such as the International Criminal Police Organization (ICPO/Interpol) or United Nations bodies such as the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) and a wider distribution was not deemed necessary. Two Governments thought that the summary duplicated the documentation of the Customs Co-operation Council (CCC) and ICPO/Interpol, and two others held the view that it should no longer be produced. One Government, in favour of discontinuation, pointed out that the

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*The Cumulative Index for the period 1980-1986 (E/NL.1986/Index) was published in July 1989 and was before the Commission at its eleventh special session. The Index for the period 1987-1990 (E/NL.1990/Index) is before the Commission at its thirty-fourth session in a draft form.

preparation of the summary and of the reports themselves required not only resources from the Division, but also a considerable amount of work from the contributing countries.

16. The following suggestions were among those made concerning the contents of the summary: precise criteria should be formulated to determine which seizures were significant; the total number of seizures should be indicated for each drug, as well as the total quantity seized of each drug and the number of persons detained; the trafficking routes should be indicated under the item "Intended destination of seized drug"; and information on the trends of the illicit traffic in designer drugs should also be added.

B. National Authorities Empowered to Issue Certificates and Authorizations for the Import and Export of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances

17. The listings published yearly in National Authorities Empowered to Issue Certificates and Authorizations for the Import and Export of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (ST/NAR.3 series) were considered indispensable by all those replying.

C. Manufacture of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances under International Control

18. The yearly list of manufacturers of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances under international control (ST/NAR.4 series) was acknowledged to be essential by almost all the Governments that referred to it. In one reply, however, the view was expressed that, by issuing a certificate or authorization for export, the empowered authority of the exporting country was implicitly confirming the licit status of the manufacturer, and that the list of manufacturers was therefore not indispensable.

D. Resource Book on Measures to Reduce Illicit Demand for Drugs

19. While in some replies, the Resource Book on Measures to Reduce Illicit Demand for Drugs (NAR/INF. series) was judged to be useful, several other Governments noted that it was not being used in their countries. The need to update the Resource Book was stressed in several replies. One Government noted that many community-based initiatives in drug abuse prevention carried out by countries in the region covering Asia and the Pacific were not included in the Resource Book. In the same reply, it was suggested that demand reduction experts should meet twice a year in order to update and enrich the Resource Book. One Government called for the same type of resource book to be produced on other matters such as supply reduction or epidemiological research.

E. Multilingual Dictionary of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances under International Control

20. In almost all the comments received, the Multilingual Dictionary was considered essential for meeting international obligations and was esteemed as a publication of high quality that should be revised periodically. In one reply, the view was expressed that it would be useful if details on the effects of each drug were included, as well as the local names used in different countries to designate substances or drug preparations under international control.

III. COMMENTS ON OTHER REPORTS AND PUBLICATIONS

A. Summary of annual reports of Governments relating to narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances

21. Several comments stressed the usefulness of the summary of annual reports of Governments relating to narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances (E/NR. series) for the meetings of the Commission. In one reply, it was noted that the summary was of direct interest to the Ministry of Finance of the State concerned. While one Government expressed the view that the summary should be expanded in order to reflect data included in parts B and C of the annual reports, another proposed that it be shortened and presented as a background document to the report of INCB. One Government suggested that the summary be designed in a manner that would show the evolution of the drug situation. The suggestion was made in one reply that, in view of the financial constraints, the summary should be discontinued, while in another reply, it was recommended that the summary should be issued more frequently.

B. Film library catalogue of the Division of Narcotic Drugs

22. In most replies, it was recommended that, should the catalogue continue to be published, it should be available only on request.

C. Annotated list of publications

23. In most of the replies where mention was made of the annotated list of publications, it was judged to be useful and worth continuing. In one reply, it was suggested that the list should be published every second or third year. One Government recommended that the updating of the annotated list of publications, as well as of the above-mentioned film library catalogue, should be made through separate lists to be consolidated every fifth year.

IV. COMMENTS ON MANUALS

24. All the manuals reviewed were considered to be highly useful. In several replies, it was noted that they were relied upon during judiciary proceedings as reference manuals for laboratory analysis. In one reply, it was suggested that the updating of the manuals be facilitated by the introduction of loose-leaf pages.

Notes

1/ See Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1989, Supplement No. 5 (E/1989/23), chap. X, sect. A.

2/ See Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1990, Supplement No. 4, (E/1990/24), chap. IX, sect. G.